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The CJIS Division Turns 20

Two Decades of Connecting, Identifying, and Helping Law Enforcement Know

Twenty years can be a long time or a short period, depending on perspective. It is more than 100 lifetimes to a dragonfly, but it is only .0000002% of the time it takes to create a diamond. To the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division, it is the time it has taken to grow from a new idea to an essential tool in the day-to-day gear of the law enforcement and intelligence communities that fight crime and terrorism.

On February 24, 1992, the FBI established the CJIS Division to consolidate fingerprint identification services (long known in the FBI as the Ident Division), the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) under one law enforcement support umbrella. CJIS was designed to be a one-stop shop for information for the cop or analyst. Nearly 1,000 acres of land had been acquired in Clarksburg, West Virginia, to locate a new facility dedicated to providing a new, more efficient fingerprint identification system, as well as other services to local, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies.



By 1993 the transformation was complete, and the old Ident Division ceased to exist as CJIS completely absorbed all fingerprint functions. The number of criminal and civil prints processed

by CJIS that year was 8.1 million. In 2011, CJIS staff handled more than 6 times that number—almost 51 million fingerprints. During that time, around 444 million fingerprint cards passed through CJIS. When CJIS was created and located in Clarksburg, it was predicted that one of its great advantages would be providing identification of criminal fingerprints in a matter of hours rather than days. With the implementation of the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) in 1999 and the upgrade to IAFIS with the addition of the Advanced Fingerprint Identification Technology in 2011, the average turnaround time for a criminal print is now between 6 and 7 *minutes*.

Since 1929, the UCR has been the premier national crime dataset—relied on by law enforcement managers, analysts, and students of crime for its reliable, comprehensive statistics. With over 80 years as the final word on crime in the United States, the UCR Program also lives up to the CJIS maxim of changing, updating, and revitalizing to provide better service. Since joining CJIS, the UCR Program has worked to increase the number of agencies that provide detailed incident-based reporting and has added cargo theft to its collection. The UCR Program is also preparing to add the collection of human trafficking crimes as it brings online a modernized and more efficient system for data collection from its more than 18,000 participating agencies in January 2013.

Since becoming part of CJIS, the NCIC grew from 451 million transactions in 1993 to 2.7 billion in 2011. That time accounts for more than 26 billion responses that the NCIC has provided to law enforcement. Today, the NCIC has more than 11.7 million active records in 19 centralized files that law enforcement can access for investigative purposes.

Even though the numbers are impressive, listing statistics can still be rather dry compared to what they add up to—a lot of essential information put in the hands of officers and analysts who then put it to very good use in keeping our communities and nation safe. Beyond statistics, CJIS strives to be a model of innovation and growth to keep up with the needs of law enforcement and intelligence.

Since 1995, Law Enforcement Online (LEO) has enabled more efficient law enforcement collaboration. Through its secure Internet site and its Virtual Command Centers that provide

Internet-based monitoring and sharing of complex operations, remotely and in real time, LEO provides the criminal justice community with free, safe communication.

In 1998, the FBI rolled out The National Instant Criminal Background Check System, commonly known as NICS, which is housed at CJIS. Since its initial year, when 900,000 transactions were completed, it has grown to provide 16 million checks in 2011. That represents a lot of gun sales approved to law-abiding citizens and a great number of weapons kept out of the wrong hands.

Since its early beginnings in 2008, the Law Enforcement National Data Exchange (N-DEx) has also been housed at CJIS. The N-DEx is a secure, online information sharing system that provides 118 million searchable records with over 720 million entities (persons, places, things, and events). In addition to incident and case reports, arrest, booking, incarceration, parole, and probation data are also available in the N-DEx.

The FBI is also in the process of building the new Biometric Technology Center on the CJIS campus, which will be home to FBI CJIS staff and Department of Defense workers who will labor at the forefront of biometric technologies. In addition, with the FBI's creation of the Biometric Center of Excellence (BCOE), CJIS hosts the focal point for biometric and identity management activities. The BCOE is charged with the mission of fostering collaboration, improving information sharing, and finding optimal solutions to biometric questions.

Even with all these accomplishments, CJIS is forever in forward motion—improving, updating, building, and adding to its systems and services. We may only be a “20-year-old,” but CJIS has carefully considered, long-term plans. Whatever challenges or needs may arise for the criminal justice and intelligence communities, CJIS is poised to meet—or exceed—them.

Stay Linked

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The CJIS Link provides information about system enhancements, training opportunities, policy changes, and successes to CJIS system users from across the law enforcement, national security, and intelligence communities. We welcome your feedback, success stories, and article suggestions to help us make this newsletter even better! E-mail *CJIS Link* staff at cjis_comm@leo.gov.

NCIC File Assists Agencies With Protective Duties

Established in April 2011, the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC's) Protective Interest File (PIF), was designed to aid law enforcement agencies that have a protective mission by providing timely information on individuals who threaten protected persons. Protective missions are defined by municipal, state, or federal statutes; regulations; or other appropriate legal authority. An example of this type of duty is a U.S. Marshal providing protection for a U.S. Attorney. Records entered into the PIF assist agencies in determining the threatener's location and may provide the agency that owns the record with information related to the threatener's criminal activity.

In addition to being searched for PIF inquiries, information in the PIF is searched when agencies submit inquiries of the Wanted Person File. When an inquiry results in a hit on a PIF record, the inquiring agency receives a caveat providing direction on how to handle the hit, and the agency that entered the original record receives a notification of the hit. Records for the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) and the U.S. Marshals Service include specific caveats, and records for other law enforcement agencies include a general caveat.

The PIF replaced the USSS Protective File, which was designed to aid the USSS in protecting the President and other authorized individuals. Unlike the USSS Protective File, in which only the USSS had the ability to enter and update information, the PIF allows all law enforcement agencies with protective duties to enter and update information.

UCR Program Changes Definition of Rape

Includes All Victims and Omits Requirement of Physical Force

In December 2011, FBI Director Robert S. Mueller, III, approved revisions to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program's 80-year-old definition of rape. As approved, the UCR Program's definition of rape is "Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim." The revised definition is the collaborative effort of the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Advisory Policy Board (APB), which is made up of representatives from all major law enforcement organizations, and staff from the national UCR Program with input from the Office of the Vice President of the United States, the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, and victim advocacy groups, such as the Women's Law Project.

The UCR Program collects data about sex offenses through two reporting systems: the traditional Summary Reporting System (SRS) and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Currently, the rape definition change applies only to the SRS since the NIBRS already captures the broader sex offense information reflected in the new definition. However, the APB's recommendation to remove the term "forcible" from all sex offenses in the UCR Program applies to both systems.

"This new, more inclusive definition will provide us with a more accurate understanding of the scope and volume of these crimes," said Attorney General Eric Holder. Proponents of the new definition state the changes will broaden the scope of the previously narrow SRS definition by capturing gender neutrality, the penetration of any bodily orifice, penetration by any object or body part, and offenses in which physical force is not involved. Now instances in which offenders sodomize victims of the same gender will be counted as rape for statistical purposes.

Once the FBI begins collecting data using the new definition of rape in January 2013, UCR Program officials expect that the number of reported rapes will rise. According to David Cuthbertson, FBI Assistant Director of the Criminal Justice Information Services Division, "As we

implement this change, the FBI is confident that the number of victims of this heinous crime will be more accurately reflected in national crime statistics.”

In the months to come, the UCR Program will advise participating law enforcement agencies of the programming changes necessary to capture the more comprehensive rape data. Although the UCR definition of rape may differ from definitions in state and local laws, the FBI expects law enforcement agencies to use it when reporting data to the UCR Program. Those totals will then be published in the annual UCR publication *Crime in the United States* and maintained in the national UCR database.

Busted...With an Assist From RISC, NICS, and NCIC

Houston (Texas) Police Department ★ On the night of November 13, 2011, officers with the Houston Police Department were conducting a traffic stop when they noticed a man riding a bicycle without proper headlight equipment. The officers stopped the man on the bicycle and questioned him. The man had gang-related tattoos on his face and body and did not have proper identification. The officers scanned the man's fingerprints using a Mobile Identification device and submitted his fingerprints to the FBI's Repository for Individuals of Special Concern (RISC). Within 2 minutes, the RISC returned a hit indicating the man had felony warrants from Wichita Falls, Texas, and Malheur County, Oregon. He was wanted for assault in Texas and for parole violation, assault, failure to appear, felony firearm possessions, and escape in Oregon.

Habersham County (Georgia) Sheriff's Office ★ On December 19, 2011, a National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) examiner processed a transaction for an individual attempting to redeem a handgun purchase from a Federal Firearm Licensee (FFL) in Cornelia, Georgia. The NICS examiner identified an active warrant from the Habersham County Sheriff's Office for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The warrant further specified that the individual should be held, if possible, since the sheriff's office would extradite nationwide. The NICS examiner denied the transaction and provided this information to the wanting agency in order to apprehend the subject.

Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Department ★ The Montgomery County Police Department recently contacted the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Operations Group regarding a bank robbery investigation. Multiple suspects were seen leaving the scene of a bank robbery in a silver Dodge Stratus. The Operations Group ran an off-line search looking for all stolen Dodge Stratus vehicles entered in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Searching within NCIC's active records, purged records, and the transactions log for inquiries made since 1990, the off-line search identified the vehicle used in the bank robbery and 9 additional bank robberies. Five people were identified and arrested, and the cases of all 10 bank robberies were closed by arrest.

NICS Hits Record Days as Index Continues to Rise

Firearms purchasers and state agencies are keeping the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) busier than usual. Within the last six months, the NICS has experienced five record-breaking processing days, surpassed 140 million firearms background checks, and seen state entries into the NICS Index more than double.

Black Friday 2011 and Other Record Days

NICS had a record-breaking day of firearms background checks on November 25, 2011. More than 129,166 checks were conducted on Black Friday sales. This number is the highest one-day total ever, 32% over the previous record on Black Friday 2008. Federal checks also posted the highest day ever on Black Friday 2011 with 81,609 completed. The same day, the NICS Contracted Call Centers handled a record 69,497 checks and NICS E-Checks had a record day of 11,953 transactions conducted. That's a lot of satisfied gun buyers and also a lot of guns kept out of the wrong hands.

The second-busiest gun-buying day in NICS' history was December 23, 2011, in the holiday rush two days before Christmas, with 102,222 checks completed. Another record-breaking processing day occurred on February 10, 2012, just four days before Valentine's Day, with 75,435 checks conducted.

140 Million Checks and Counting

On December 17, 2011, NICS' staff processed its *140 millionth* firearms background check. The transaction was an immediate proceed for a long gun purchase out of Paris, Arkansas. This is a significant milestone in the system's history since its beginning in 1998.

NICS Index on the Rise

In January 2008, Congress signed the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 (NIAA), which authorized the Attorney General to obtain electronic versions of information on individuals disqualified by federal law from purchasing or possessing firearms; that information is stored in the NICS Index for use in determining eligibility to purchase firearms. (The NICS Index contains information on individuals who are prohibited from possessing a firearm when disqualifying information may not be available through the National Crime Information Center or the Interstate Identification Index.) The NIAA also required the Attorney General to establish regulations and procedures to protect the privacy of records

submitted to the NICS, through consultations with state and mental health agencies regarding the adequacy of proposed regulations.

Since the NIAA was signed into law in January 2008, statistical totals for all NICS Index categories have more than doubled. From January 31, 2008, to December 31, 2011, state entry totals in the NICS Index increased from 1,090,099 to 2,289,386. State mental health entries in the NICS Index saw a similar increase from 405,761 to 1,218,156 for the same time period.

One of the biggest hurdles to states submitting records to the NICS Index is state laws that prohibit sharing mental health information. However, states are required to make this information available if they wish to obtain grant funding through the NICS Act Record Improvement Program (NARIP). The state of Oregon received NARIP funding in 2009 and 2010, using the \$770,849 and \$2 million, respectively, to update criminal history records and automate systems to achieve NICS Index participation and share disqualifying mental health information. During the last few days of 2011, Oregon submitted 24,729 mental health entries to the NICS Index.

To assist states in their application for NARIP funding, the NICS Section has hosted NIAA Regional meetings where NICS staff assist state representatives in their efforts to meet the requirements of the NIAA for completeness of records, for funding, and legislation.

Whether it's Black Friday or a "slow day," NICS staff are hard at work processing transactions and assisting states with ensuring records are complete to help facilitate the legal purchase of firearms by citizens and to prevent firearms from ending up in the hands of those barred from owning them.

Need to Know

User Fee Changes for Criminal History Record Information Checks, Decreases Noted

With the cost of most goods and services on the rise, many fingerprint contributors are actually seeing decreased processing costs. Effective March 19, 2012, the CJIS Division implemented its revised fee schedule for processing criminal history record information (CHRI) checks. In general, fees for fingerprint-based CHRI checks decreased, and fees for name-based CHRI checks remained the same. For example, the fee for processing electronic fingerprint submissions decreased from \$19.25 to \$16.50, and the fee for processing electronic name checks remained unchanged at \$2.25. Volunteers seeking positions of trust in accordance with the National Child Protection Act get a decrease of 25¢ per transaction.

The changes are the result of an analysis of costs associated with providing the checks using criteria from the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-25, User Charges. With these criteria and the increased number of billable transactions, the CJIS Division was able to decrease the cost per individual transaction. The adjustments were publicized on December 20, 2011, via a Notice in the [*Federal Register*](#).

Please note that the FBI bills agencies based upon the number of transactions completed as opposed to the number of transactions received. Fingerprint contributors with specific questions regarding their fees should contact the centralized billing service provider to which they submit fingerprints.

CJIS Information Letters Available on the Law Enforcement Online

CJIS Information Letters are available via the Internet on the Law Enforcement Online (LEO) at https://www.leo.gov/http://leowcs.leopriv.gov/lesig/cjis/general_information/newsletters/information_letter/ or by clicking the following series of links: SIGs, Unrestricted, CJIS, General Information, CJIS Informational Letters. Users with questions concerning access to the LEO should contact the LEO Help Desk by telephone at (888) 334-4536.



Celebrating CJIS

Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division this year, we take a look back at where we've been and where we are going. After the creation of the new division in February 1992, the building of a home for it began in West Virginia. The main complex rose up in steel like a phoenix from the ashes in the photo at top, from April 1993. Today the sleek glass and steel building houses a hub of information for the criminal justice community. And looking to the future, the new Biometric Technology Center currently stands in steel on the CJIS Campus. When it is completed in 2014, it will be home to FBI CJIS and Department of Defense employees that will work at the forefront of biometric technologies.

